



Nalandabodhi Connecticut
Paramita of the Month Newsletter



"Do not go after the past,
Nor lose yourself in the future.
For the past no longer exists,
And the future is not yet here.
By looking deeply at things just as they are,
In this moment, here and now,
The seeker lives calmly and freely.
You should be attentive today,
For waiting until tomorrow is too late.
Death can come and take us by surprise--
How can we gainsay it?."

-The Bhaddekarata Sutra

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This month we will examine Patrul Rinpoche's exposition on the practice of transcendent concentration. Patrul Rinpoche begins by advising us to free ourselves from distraction. He admonishes us: "whatever is brought together will fall apart... understand the futility of becoming attached to the ephemeral." Wanting things is actually the cause of all of our troubles. We are never satisfied and the more we have the more our avarice grows. Most of us, heedless of wrongdoing and suffering, will risk our lives, disregard all shame and dishonesty, all prudence and forethought, just to gain the most trifling material possession. We totally disregard the Dharma and our samayas in our pursuits. Finally, at our death all of this is lost to us and can do us no good. Those who limit their ambitions to this present life in this way are spoken of as being "childish." Such childish people are very hard to please, and are never satisfied. Such persons and their preoccupations are to be abandoned. Patrul Rinpoche advises that we abandon all these distractions like "so much spit in the dust." As was said by Jetsun Milarepa:

"In places where you feel lonely,
There concentration arises!"

It is in seclusion and free from distractions that the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas of the past found tranquility. In these places there is nothing to make you busy, no distractions, no commerce, no childish friends, no work. Awareness will be naturally clear and concentration will develop by itself. Patrul Rinpoche states: "Even without diligent efforts to practice, in such places disillusionment with samsara, determination to be free from it, love, compassion, and all the other excellent qualities of the path will arise spontaneously."

Actual concentration is characterized as being of three types: that practiced by ordinary beings, clearly discerning concentration, and the excellent concentration of the Tathagatas. If you are attached to the bliss, clarity, and absence of thought in meditation; if your practice is colored by affinity for experiences, that is what is called concentration practiced by ordinary beings. When you are free from any attachment and are no longer fascinated by concentration, but still cling to emptiness as an antidote, that is called clearly discerning concentration. When you no longer have any concept of emptiness as an antidote, but remain in concept free concentration, that is the excellent concentration of the Tathagatas.

Patrul Rinpoche closes his exposition by stating that the essence of transcendent practice of concentration is "to sit straight upright, your mind free from any thought, resting in equanimity in a state where there is no grasping to anything." I aspire that you all may achieve this mastery of the paramita of concentration in this very life!

May all beings benefit!

The information presented in this newsletter is based upon teachings presented by Patrul Rinpoche presented in the text "[Words of My Perfect Teacher](#)." This text is available through [Namse Bangdzo Bookstore](#).



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